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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies and describes techniques that states may use to evaluate the three components of their programs funded under Section 353 of the Adult Education Act: (1) state administration; (2) special projects and staff training programs; and (3) effects or impacts of projects on local programs and instructors. Evaluation of these components is mandated by the Adult Education Act of 1988. The paper includes an overview of recommended techniques for each of the three components and appendixes providing detailed guidelines on evaluation processes, a summary of appropriate evaluation/monitoring approaches to the five categories of Adult Basic Education (ABE) Special Projects, and a list of principles and diagnostic questions from ABE staff development self-study, as well as an annotated bibliography of six documents on relevant administrative and evaluation questions that are readily available to state adult education programs. (KC)

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EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF SECTION 353 PROJECTS

DIVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION
U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION

May, 1988

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Introduction

The Adult Education Act (PL 100-297) takes effect on July 1, 1988. This legislation and regulations require that States evaluate their Sec. 353 (formerly Sec. 310) program at least once every three years. A few States conduct extensive evaluations of their systems and projects. Most, however, develop a narrative report based on monitoring observations and project reports. Others do no more than describe what was funded.

The purpose of this paper is to identify and promote techniques that States may use to evaluate the three components of their Sec. 353 program:

1. State administration,
2. Special projects and staff training programs,
3. Effects or impacts of projects on local programs and instructors.

It includes an overview of techniques for each of the three components and an Appendix containing evaluation processes and approaches as well as an annotated bibliography of more extensive documents that are readily available to State Adult Education Programs.

Consultation, information, and documents addressing Sec. 353 evaluation are also available from:

James Parker
Division of Adult Education
U.S. Dept. of Education
Washington, DC 20202-5515
202/732-2399

Evaluating Sec. 353 Administration

How a State administers its 353 program determines to a large degree whether its projects will be, or even can be, evaluated. Field consultants have recommended the following techniques to help States assure project productivity and accountability:

1. Review the State Plan to assure that 353 priorities will help achieve State goals,

2. Consider the refunding of priorities not met by previous projects,

3. Analyze the need for both Statewide and individual local program impact from 353 project results,

4. Assure a realistic level of funding in relation to project objectives,

5. Publish guidelines that...

   - o Provide a clear statement of background, need, and expected outcomes for each priority to be funded
   - o Distinguish between Statewide vs. local impact intents
   - o Identify and give a rationale for project funding levels
   - o Distinguish between compliance reports vs. products to be disseminated
   - o Provide specifications for project evaluation
   - o Clearly identify intended content of products,

6. Require quarterly progress reports or formative evaluations from projects,

7. Conduct site visits to projects at least twice yearly,

8. Provide for the summative evaluation of projects,

9. Provide for a third party (external) evaluation of projects that will be disseminated throughout the State.

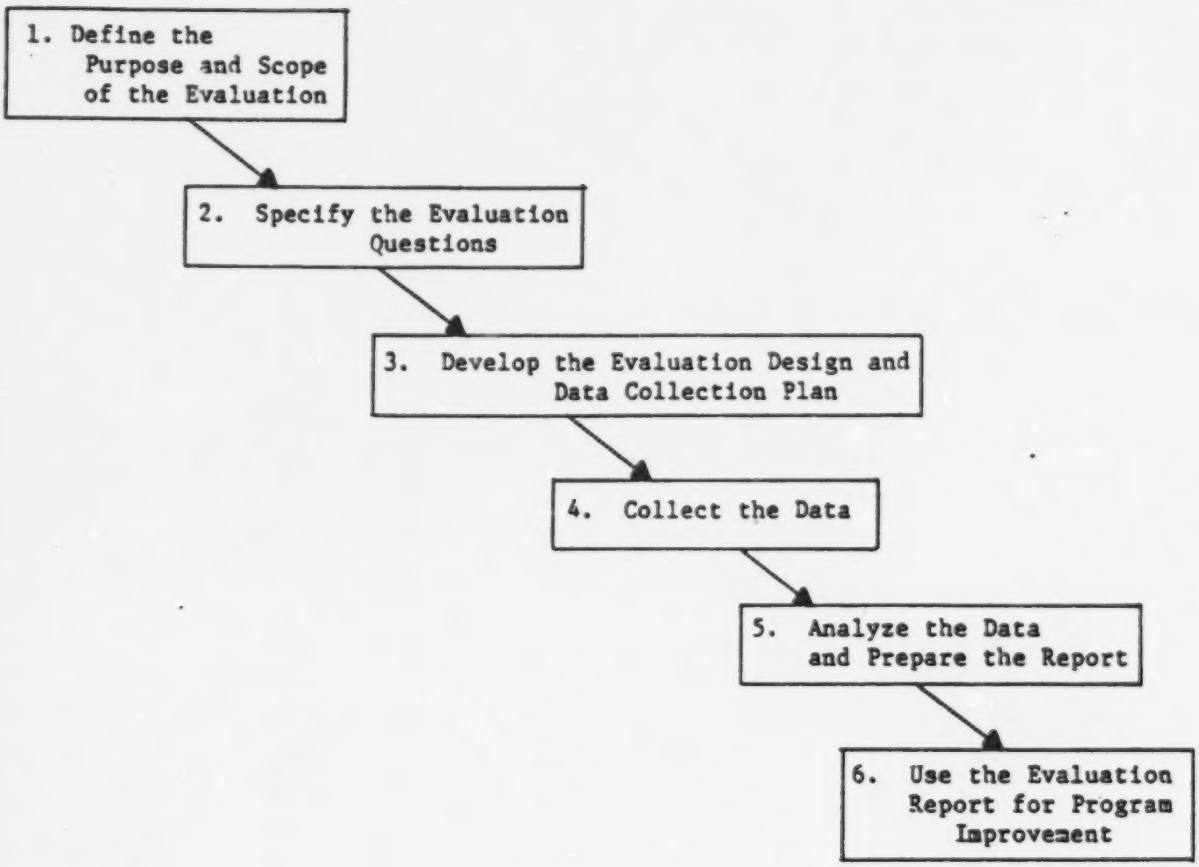
These, and other State administrative activities are included in the 310 Self Assessment guide (see Appendix A).

A Self-Study Guide for Section 353 administration will be available in June, 1988. This guide should be useful to State staffs in evaluating and planning for the improvement of special project and teacher training efforts.

Evaluating Special Projects and Training Programs

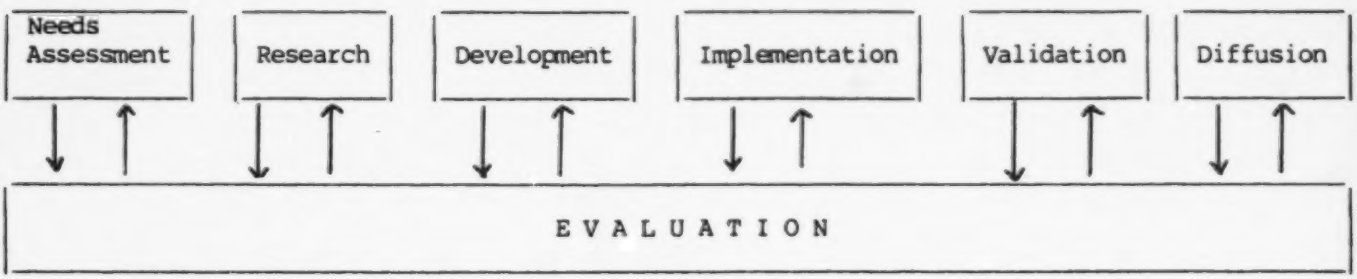
An evaluation guide was recently developed under a Federal Vocational Education contract. It includes the following exhibit:

STEPS IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS


1. Define the Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation
2. Specify the Evaluation Questions
3. Develop the Evaluation Design and Data Collection Plan
4. Collect the Data
5. Analyze the Data and Prepare the Report
6. Use the Evaluation Report for Program Improvement

(see Appendix B)

An Evaluation Guide for A.E. Programs, from a 1984 310 project, offers this graphic to illustrate the relationship of evaluation to program development:



In this context, the term "evaluation" refers to the process of selecting, collecting, and interpreting information needed for decision making. It is essentially research applied to decision making. As such, evaluation goes hand-in-hand with program development. "Program development" is defined as a systematic process for creating or modifying methods, procedures, and/or materials to be applied toward the achievement of certain specified objectives.

Most successful programs follow the same cycle over the course of their development. Underlying the entire program development cycle is the evaluation process. Evaluation serves to provide objective information and feedback to each step within the program development cycle. This use of evaluation would relate most directly to 353 "Demonstration Projects" (see Appendix A).

"Experimental Projects", of course, require a more extensive, more technical evaluation process. Appendix A also describes a Validation Guide for A.E. Projects that outlines processes, approaches, and criteria for project validation.

Projects that are intended to have Statewide impact should involve an outside, "third party" evaluation in their plan. The National Adult Literacy Project suggested the following criteria for selecting outside consultants:

(1) Evaluators are trained in and feel comfortable using several different evaluation methodologies,

(2) Evaluators have a collaborative working style; they will work with programs to determine the array of measurable outcomes that are important in the view of the individual programs,

(3) Evaluators are adaptable; they can adjust their methods to the unique needs of an adult education environment,

(4) Evaluators are experienced in working in alternative education settings, preferably adult settings.

Many special projects produce some sort of "product": a handbook, curriculum, guide, or other potentially useful material. Unfortunately, many of the publications are not well evaluated or field tested . Some are poorly packaged. The Focus project in Pennsylvania has reviewed dozens of 310 products from a variety of States. Focus rates these materials on:

- Effectiveness - objectives and outcomes clearly stated, materials linked to results, content appropriate for target audience,

- Innovation - addresses major priorities, creative use of resources, content not commercially available,

- Adoptability - clearly written, little staff training needed to transfer.

A major new evaluation resource has just been published by a New York 310 project. The Source Book for Evaluating Special Projects identifies five types of projects and related evaluation goals.

1) Developmental Programs can be thought of as entrepreneurial activities. They are by nature risky, and they frequently aren't successful. However, they teach us a great deal about what does work, and eventually that knowledge can be used to develop a model that is successful. Evaluation in a Development Project focuses on gathering information on the possibilities of the program.

2) The purpose for evaluating Demonstration Projects is to assess their performance in field conditions. We want to know if the program works well enough to implement Statewide. We also want to know the performance standards for the program so that it can be monitored effectively when it is installed on a wider basis.

3) For Installation Projects, evaluation and monitoring efforts are applied to determine how well these programs are meeting the standards developed in the Demonstration phase. When programs do not meet these standards, it is up to managers at the program site and the funding agency to do something about it. When managers are given valid and reliable tools to judge their organization's performance against that of some standard, they are eager to use them and incorporate them into their management procedures.

4) In Training Projects, evaluators want to know if the training episode was effective in transferring the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the curriculum and if the trainer made the best possible presentation of the material. The evaluator may also want to know if the training has had an effect on performance in the work setting. In some cases, when the training will be repeated

over time as a standard item (e.g., training in prescriptive/diagnostic instruction), the evaluation may help improve the curriculum. In these cases, assessment of the power of the training to affect program performance will become especially important.

5) Planning and Evaluation Projects are usually episodic. The evaluation of these projects involves the validity and reliability of the process and whether the process produces the desired results (see Appendices A and C).

The New York Source Book also offers advice on writing an evaluation report.

The report should be written in clear, readable language. It must be accessible to an audience with varying degrees of knowledge about A.B.E. and evaluation methodology. The report will be used for different purposes. It should include a summary or condensed version of the evaluation study for the casual reader, as well as a full presentation of relevant findings for the serious reader.

A typical report includes the following sections:

1. Program overview, including its history, rationale, goals, objectives, target groups, components,

2. Description of the evaluation study, including the evaluation questions and the evaluation design,

3. Results of findings, including presentation of data tables or illustrations,

4. Discussion of the results in terms of the program's effectiveness and limitations, including discussion of any limitations to the interpretation of results,

5. Conclusions and recommendations related to the programs,

6. Copies of non-standardized instruments used in the evaluation in an appendix.

Another resource is available to evaluate, and plan for improvement of, staff training programs.

The Self-Study Guide for ABE staff development programs was designed to help staff trainers and State staff development coordinators assess, plan and better understand their staff development programs. The guide contains six General Principles addressing collaborative planning, institutional policy, conditions of training, training processes, indiviual learner needs, and evaluation.

The Self-Study components include a set of 3-7 diagnostic questions relating to each principle, a section for planning the application of the principles, a section for assessing performance and a page for planning program improvement activities (see Appendix D).

Evaluating the Impact of 353 Projects

Since the responsibility for Adult Education Special Projects and Staff Training was transferred to States in 1974, few States have systematically assessed the impact of their 310 programs. However, some States have conducted reviews of 310 projects, products, and the usefulness of projects to the field.

Florida funded a study of the "Impact of 310 Projects, 1980-84 (see Appendix A).

The general purpose of the study was to determine the scope and impact of 310 projects on adult education in Florida. Specifically, the study provided information on:

1. How well 310 projects have helped to improve instructional and administrative skills of adult educators,

2. How well 310 projects have helped to increase the knowledge of adult educators in methods, techniques and materials available for adult education,

3. The degree to which 310 project exemplary programs or models have helped to promote more effective adult educational practices,

4. How well 310 project products and processes have been effectively communicated to the appropriate target population,

5. The effectiveness of projects design and implementation procedures,

6. Possible areas of emphasis in which adult educational efforts have not been effective, and

7. The scope of 310 projects funded yearly.

Three strategies were used to conduct the study: survey questionnaire, case studies and project reviews. The survey questionnaire was constructed from the research objectives and administered to adult education administrators and teachers. Nineteen projects were selected for case studies based on the criteria of "good examples" and "not so good examples" of 310 projects, type, size, cost and geographical location. Projects from 1980-1984 were reviewed to determine their scope and how well national and state priorities for adult education were addressed.

The study team developed seven recommendations to help improve future projects. These recommendations are good advice for all State 353 programs:

1. Assessment

   An assessment should be required for all 353 applicants to establish the problem, examine constrains (human and material), and identify methods-means to implements the project,

2. Goals and Objectives

   Goals and objectives should be derived from needs assessment results. There should be a logical transition from goals or purpose to objectives, and from objectives to activities. The objectives should be specific enough to be measurable,

3. Evaluation

   Evaluation should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the projects,

4. Follow-up

   Follow-up plans should be included to measure impact of the project,

5. Dissemination

   A plan for dissemination should go beyond just mailing out information to all local directors, to include identifying the primary audience and informing the audience about the nature of the products,

6. Materials

   Materials which are produced should not only be of good quality but should be of the appropriate reading level and graphic layout to enable users to benefit from the materials. These materials should be usable by other adult education programs,

7. Documentation

   It is important that project activities be documented systematically. The record should include names and addresses of participants and other routine records of a project. Care should be taken to document the strengths, weaknesses, problems encountered, and to recommend how the process may be improved for future adaptation or adoption.

Evaluating impacts of staff training programs is often a difficult task. These documents described in Appendix A offer examples and techniques for staff training evaluation and impact assessment:

1. Evaluation Guide for A.E. Programs,

2. Source Book for Evaluating Special Projects.

Conclusions

The evaluation of Special Projects and Staff Training Programs should be considered an important component of a State's 353 program. Accountability is seldom inexpensive, and requires considerable imagination, time, and other uses of SEA and field resources. But the payoffs, in terms of program improvement, project information gathering, field (and even national) credibility, and increased or at least maintained funding, will be well worth the effort.

Appendix A

Bibliography

1. 310 Self Assessment for Adult Education Administrators is an instrument to assist State Adult Education staff in planning and improving their administrative systems. It includes 57 questions in five administrative areas: Setting Priorities, Application Process, Guidelines, Project Monitoring, and Dissemination. Developed by the Division of Adult Education, U.S. Dept. of Education, 1984, 22 pages.

2. Evaluation Guide for Adult Education Programs includes strategies and techniques for A.E. program evaluation. It addresses The Stages of Evaluation Process, Evaluation Design, Methods of Data Collection, Statistical Analysis Procedures, and Reporting Evaluation Results. Developed by Research for Better Schools, Philadelphia, PA under a New Jersey 310 grant, 1984, 75 pages.

3. Validation Guide for Adult Education Projects covers a Rationale for Validation, Characteristics of Validation Models, and Issues in Validation such as adoption vs. adaption, educational vs. statistical significance, program staff responsibilities, and costs of validation. Developed by Research for Better Schools under a New Jersey 310 grant, 1984, 23 pages.

4. Source Book for Evaluating Special Projects includes a presentation of evaluation approaches for five types of 353 (310) projects: Development, Demonstration, Installation, Training, and Support Projects. It also contains techniques and instruments for evaluating various projects. Developed by Interorganizational Relationships, LTD., Altamont, NY under a New York 310 grant, 1988, 44 pages plus Appendices.

5. Impact of 310 Projects in Florida, 1980-1984 covers The Methodology of the scope - of - impact study, Strengths and Weaknesses of 310 projects, and other findings of surveys, case studies, and project reviews. Recommendations for improvement of Florida's 310 effort are offered. Study conducted by Florida A & M University under a 310 grant, 1985, 27 pages (abridged).

6. Effective ABE Staff Development - a Self-Study Guide presents 28 diagnostic questions illustrating six General Principles: PIanning Involvement, Support Policies, Training Conditions, Mastery, Individual's Needs, and Evaluation. The guide includes worksheets for diagnosis, planning of activities, and program assessment and improvement for each principle. Developed by The Division of Adult Education, U.S. Dept. of Education, 1987, 19 pages.

EVALUATION PROCESS AND PLANS

Evaluation is one of the basic tools for program management and improvement. The central questions to be answered include:

- To what extent have program objectives been met?
- What contributed to the successes and failures?
- What changes and improvements should be made?

Thus, evaluation provides information for documenting and improving program effectiveness.

The documentation of program effectiveness involves the systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of information or data. It should not be forgotten, however, that the improvement of program effectiveness involves human judgement, i.e., using the reported data for planning and decision-making which will result in program improvement and increased effectiveness.

A. Overview of the Evaluation Process

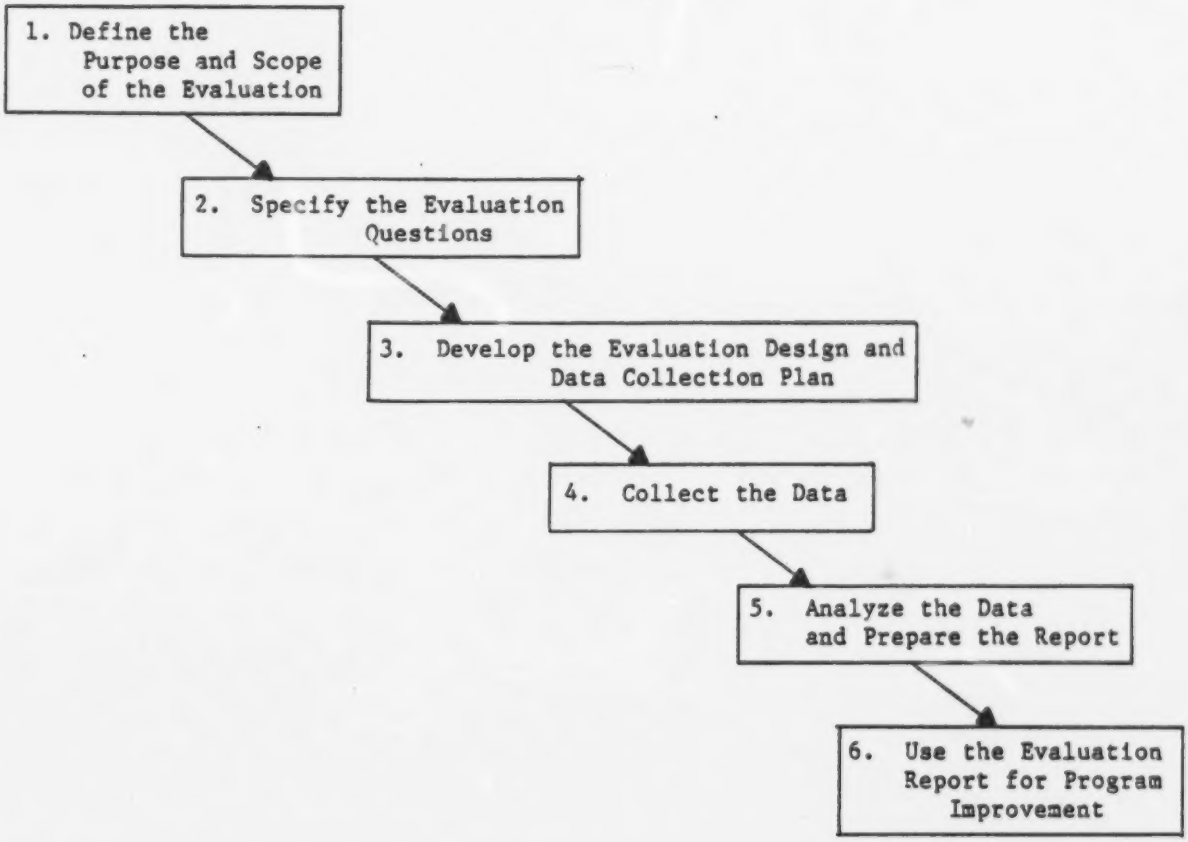
The evaluation process can be described as involving six progressive steps. These steps are shown in Exhibit 1, and are discussed below. It is important to remember that initiating an evaluation cannot wait until a program is nearing completion. An evaluation should be planned as part of the overall program and should be implemented at the same time the program begins operation. In this manner, program activities can be adequately documented from their beginning, and baseline data on program participants can be collected as they enter the program.

Step 1: Defining the Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The first step in planning an evaluation is to define its purpose and scope. This helps set the limits of the evaluation, confining it to a manageable size. Defining its purpose includes deciding on the goals and objectives for the evaluation, and on the audience who will use the evaluation results. The evaluation goals and objectives may vary depending on whether the program being evaluated is new and is going through a try-out period, or if a program has been thoroughly tested and needs documentation of its success before information about the program is widely disseminated and adoption by others encouraged.

EXHIBIT 1

STEPS IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS


1. Define the Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation
2. Specify the Evaluation Questions
3. Develop the Evaluation Design and Data Collection Plan
4. Collect the Data
5. Analyze the Data and Prepare the Report
6. Use the Evaluation Report for Program Improvement

Depending on the purpose, the audience for evaluation may be restricted to the project director and his/her staff, or may include a wider range of individuals, from agency administrators and decision-makers, to planners and other officials at the local, state, or federal level.

The scope of the evaluation depends on the evaluation's purpose and the information needs of its intended audience. These needs determine the specific components of a program which should be evaluated and on the specific project objectives which are to be addressed. If an evaluation of a program has recently been conducted, a limited evaluation may be designed to target on certain parts of the program which have been changed, revised, or modified. Similarly, the evaluation may be designed to focus on certain participant objectives which were shown to be only partially achieved in a previous evaluation. Thus, this step will define exactly which aspects of the program are to be evaluated. Costs and resources available to conduct the evaluation must also be considered in this decision.

Step 2: Specifying the Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions are general questions that grow out of the purpose and scope specified in the previous step. They help further define the limits of the evaluation. The evaluation questions are to be discussed and answered in the evaluation report and should be formulated to address the needs of the specific audience to whom the evaluation is directed. Evaluation questions should be developed for each component of the program which falls into the scope which was defined in the previous step. For example, questions may be formulated which concern the adequacy of the curriculum and the experience of the teaching staff; other questions may concern the appropriateness of the vocational skills being taught in relation to employment opportunities in the local community; additional questions may relate to the appropriateness of the individuals being recruited for the program with respect to their English language proficiency and employment status; and finally, evaluation questions may relate to the extent to which participants are achieving the goals of the program, such as stable employment and increased earning capability.

A good way to begin formulating evaluation questions is to carefully examine the project's objectives; another source of questions is to anticipate problem areas concerning program implementation. Importantly, the audience for or expected users of the evaluation should be involved in developing the evaluation questions. This should never be left solely to the outside evaluator, no matter how familiar he or she is with the program. Once the evaluation questions are developed, they should be prioritized and examined in relation to the time and resources available. Once this is accomplished, the final set of evaluation questions can be selected.

Step 3: Developing the Evaluation Design and Data Collection Plan

This step involves specifying the approach to answering the evaluation questions, including how the required data will be collected. This will involve:

- specifying the data sources for each evaluation question;
- specifying the types of data collection approaches and instruments needed;
- specifying the specific time periods for collecting the data;
- specifying the staff members who will be assigned to collecting the data, and how their data collection responsibilities relate to their other project responsibilities; and
- specifying the resources which will be required to carry out the evaluation.

The design and data collection plan is actually a roadmap for carrying out the evaluation. An important part of the design is the development or selection of the instruments for collecting and recording the data needed to answer the evaluation questions. Data collection instuments may vary from record-keeping forms, questionnaires, interview guides, to vocational and language skills tests. Some of the instrumentation may already be available, i.e., forms used for recordkeeping and management purposes, such as recruitment or intake forms, etc. Some of these forms will have to be modified to meet the evaluation needs. In other cases, new instruments will have to be created.

In designing the instruments, the relevance of the items to the evaluation questions and the ease or difficulty of obtaining the desired data should be considered. Thus, the instruments should be reviewed by the project director and staff members to ensure that the data can be obtained in a cost-effective manner and without causing major disruptions or inconveniences to the project.

Step 4: Collecting the Data

Data collection should follow the plans developed in the previous step. The individuals assigned to the various data collection tasks need to be thoroughly trained in the data collection requirements and procedures. Only by following standardized procedures will the data be reliable and valid. Following training, the project director needs to monitor the staff to ensure that they are accomplishing their data collection assignments according to the specified time schedule. The data should be recorded carefully and neatly so they can be read and interpreted during the analysis stage. Proper record-keeping and filing are similarly important so that the data are not lost or misplaced. Any problem should be discussed with the project director

and evaluator. Deviations from the data collection plan should be documented so that they can be considered in analyzing and interpreting the data.

Step 5: Analyzing the Data and Preparing a Report

This step involves tabulating, summarizing, and interpreting the collected data in such a way as to answer the evaluation questions. These procedures should be compatable with the type and amount of data which were collected, and the goals and objectives of the evaluation. Appropriate descriptive measures (frequency and percentage distributions, central tendency and variability, correlation, etc.) and inferential techniques (significance of difference between means and other statistics, analysis of variance, ch-square, etc.) should be used to analyze the data. The local evaluator should have responsibility for this aspect of the evaluation.

The evaluation will not be completed until a report has been written and the results communicated to the project director and other appropriate administrators and decision-makers. In preparing the report, the writers should be clear about the audience for whom the report is being prepared. Two broad questions need to be considered: (1) What does the the audience need to know about the evaluation results? and (2) How can these results be best presented? Different audiences need different levels of information. Administrators need general information for policy decision-making, while project staff may need more detailed information which focuses on project activities and effects on participants.

The report should cover the following:

- The goals of the evaluation;
- The procedures or methods used;
- The findings; and
- The implication of the findings including recommendations for changes or improvements in the program.

Importantly, the report should be organized so that it addresses all of the evaluation questions specified in Step 2.

Step 6: Using the Evaluation Report for Program Improvement

The evaluation should not be considered successful until its results are used by program managers and decision-makers for program improvement. After all, this is the ultimate reason for conducting the evaluation. The evaluation may indicate that a program activity is not being implemented according to plan, or it may indicate that a particular objective is not being met. If this does occur, it is then the responsibility of the project director to make appropriate changes to remedy the situation. Project directors should never be satisfied with their programs. Improvements can always be made, and evaluation is an important tool for accomplishing this purpose.

B. Planning the Evaluation

The evaluation should be conducted by an independent, experienced evaluator. This individual will provide the expertise for an evaluation which is comprehensive, objective, and technically sound. The project director and her/his staff must work closely with the evaluator beginning with the planning stage to ensure the evaluation meets the exact needs of the project.

Adequate time and thought for planning an evaluation is essential, and will give the project director and staff an opportunity to develop ideas about what they would like the evaluation to accomplish. The evaluation should address the goals specified in the project application and management plan. In some projects, however, one or more goals or objectives may require special attention. Some activities or instructional strategies may have been recently implemented, or the staff may be aware of some special problems which should be addressed. For example, there might have been a recent breakdown in communication between the ESL teachers and the vocational instructional staff; or the characteristics of the participants in recent training cycles might have begun to differ significantly from past groups, having implications for vocational training or the approach to language instruction. These are examples of things which should be considered when the project director selects an evaluator. The evaluator must then familiarize himself or herself with the special issues of concern on which the evaluation should focus.

Thus, the initial step of the evaluation process involves thinking about any special needs which will help in planning the overall evaluation and selecting the evaluator. Special evaluation questions and problems identified in the instructional staff area might suggest that an evaluator is needed who has expertise in evaluating instructional systems, etc. Similarly, if the project needs an evaluation which requires frequent on-site observation of teaching methodologies by the evaluator, then this will help the project director focus on hiring someone located nearby so that travel costs can be kept to a minimum.

In summary, defining the scope involves setting limits, identifying specific areas of inquiry and deciding on what parts of the program and on which objectives the evaluation will focus. The scope does not answer the question of how the evaluation will be conducted. In establishing the scope, one is actually determining which components or parts of the program will be evaluated. This step is important and, indeed, implies that the evaluation may not cover every aspect and activity of the program.

C. Selecting the Evaluator

Selecting an evaluator for the program is one of the most important elements in ensuring a technically sound and useful evaluation. The basic criteria suggested for selection are as follows:

- Skills in evaluation design, constructing data collection instruments, collecting data, managing and maintaining quality control over data collection, analyzing data, and writing reports;
- Experience in conducting evaluations of vocational training projects targeted at LEP adults;
- Knowledge of the BVT model;
- Experience in collecting data from employers and community and business groups;
- Ability and willingness to work directly with the project director in order to design the evaluation, oversee its implementation, and prepare a report;
- Reside within reasonable distance of the project so that travel costs are minimal and scheduling work sessions is not a problem; and
- Available for complete time period required for the project at a rate that fits the basic budget resources allocated to evaluation and the number of evaluator-days projected in the initial planning; the project might expect to plan for at least 20-25 work-days for the evaluator.

Once an individual has been selected and has agreed to become the local evaluator for the project, a contract and work plan must be developed so that expectations, roles, and responsibilities are clear to all parties.

D. Specifying the Roles of Project Director, Staff and Evaluator

In order for the evaluation to be planned and carried out effectively, the roles of the project director, staff, and evaluator must be made clear to all parties. The evaluator should be responsible for specifying the design and developing the data collection instruments, training project staff to collect the required data, analyzing the data, and preparing a comprehensive report. The project director should work with the evaluator in specifying the objectives and scope of the evaluation, and assigning and supervising the project staff in carrying out their assigned data collection and record-keeping tasks. The project staff should be assigned the major data collection and record-keeping tasks for the evaluation. This will increase their job responsibilities, but is the most cost-effective way of collecting the required data. More specifically, the suggested roles of the project director, the evaluator, and the project staff are listed below:

The project director will:

- recruit and hire an experienced evaluator;
- work with the evaluator to define the objectives and scope of the evaluation;
- work with the evaluator to define the evaluation questions which will be addressed;
- review and approve data collection instruments and procedures to ensure that they are compatible with project activities;
- assign and supervise project staff for data collection and recordkeeping;
- approve schedule and expenditures for the evaluation; and
- approve final evaluation report.

The evaluator will:

- work with the project director to define the purpose and scope of the evaluation;
- work with the project director to specify the evaluation questions which will be addressed;

- develop the evaluation design;
- develop data collection instruments and procedures, including the schedule and calendar for all data collection;
- train project staff to collect the required data;
- analyze the collected data to answer the evaluation questions; and
- prepare the evaluation report.

The project staff will:

- collect the evaluation data;
- maintain participant tracking records as well as conduct follow-up surveys of former trainees; and
- assist the evaluator in tabulating and summarizing the collected data.

E. Allocating Resources

Critical questions in planning the evaluation concern how much staff time and financial resources can be expended on the evaluation, and what resources are needed to actually carry it out. These two questions need to be addressed by the project director and the evaluator early in the design process. Many evaluators will raise these questions in the initial exploratory discussions concerning the evaluation. Preliminary planning will have to be accomplished before a final decision can be made on both the role and level of effort of the evaluator and each project staff member.

A variety of design decisions must be made during the planning stages that affect the allocation of both financial and staff resources. Each decision affects the staff/evaluator roles and functions, level of effort, and resources, and ultimately determines the overall scope of the evaluation. For instance, a record-keeping procedure must be developed to maintain accurate evaluation data. A tracking system is also needed to manage follow-up surveys of former trainees. These record-keeping and tracking systems, as well as the actual data collection activities, involve staff and material costs. These costs need to be considered in defining the final scope of the evaluation.

APPENDIX C

The purpose of Adult Basic Education Special Projects funded under Section 310 of the Adult Education Act, P.L. 91-230 and Amendments, is to strengthen adult literacy services through experimentation with and dissemination of innovative instructional methods, programs, and operational and administrative systems.

Based on a review of proposals and summaries of Section 310 projects funded over the past several years, we have developed a typology of 310 projects using five major categories. These categories have implications for evaluation and monitoring approaches. The first three categories correspond to three stages in program design: **Development, Demonstration** and **Implementation**. The last two categories, **Training** and **Planning** and **Evaluation**, provide support functions for the actual programs. The five-category project typology is shown below:

1. **Development** - Projects funded in the Program Development category involve planning and/or pilot testing new and innovative approaches to adult education.

Innovation occurs when someone decides to try something different. The innovation can be an application of an idea or an approach from another program, a variation on the current program, or a new approach based on the latest research. The most appropriate sites for **Development Projects** are agencies with creative staff who already are developing innovative programs, often with an evaluation component. Examples of potential **Development Projects** might include a mini-grant for the use of video in ESL classes or a vocational program for GED students. Approaches to evaluating **Development Projects** are discussed in Chapter 3.

2. **Demonstration** - Projects in the Demonstration category usually involve implementation and further refinement of innovative program approaches that have shown promise of success through initial pilot testing.

Demonstration Projects generally implement among broader population groups and geographic areas those model programs initially developed with a more limited number of people. These projects are of greatest value to the overall service system when they include a formal evaluation of their effectiveness and efficiency. **Demonstration Projects** can also assess the wisdom of replicating program models on a statewide basis and establish criteria for monitoring installation of successful program models. Sites most suitable for

Demonstration Projects include large agencies serving heterogeneous populations and those who have well-developed evaluation resources. GRASP and Job Clubs are good examples of projects in this category. Basic guidelines for evaluating these programs are found in **An Administrator's Evaluation Guide for Attaining Validation in Adult Education**, available from the New York State Education Department, Bureau of Adult and Continuing Education.

3. **Installation** - Projects in the Installation category facilitate expanded use of program models whose performance has been validated in Demonstration Projects.

Installation Projects provide implementation of successful program models within pre-established guidelines, and these projects are monitored to insure conformity to program replication criteria (e.g. use of multi-disciplinary curriculum). These programs benefit the overall service system by widening the application of innovative approaches to adult learning. Sites most appropriate for **Installation Projects** are agencies serving high-need areas. Section 310 monies would probably be used most appropriately to fund only the start-up of projects. The evaluation of these projects is discussed in **The Data Base Primer**, available from the New York State Education Department, Bureau of Adult and Continuing Education.

4. **Training** - **Training Projects** provide new knowledge and skills for service providers and program managers.

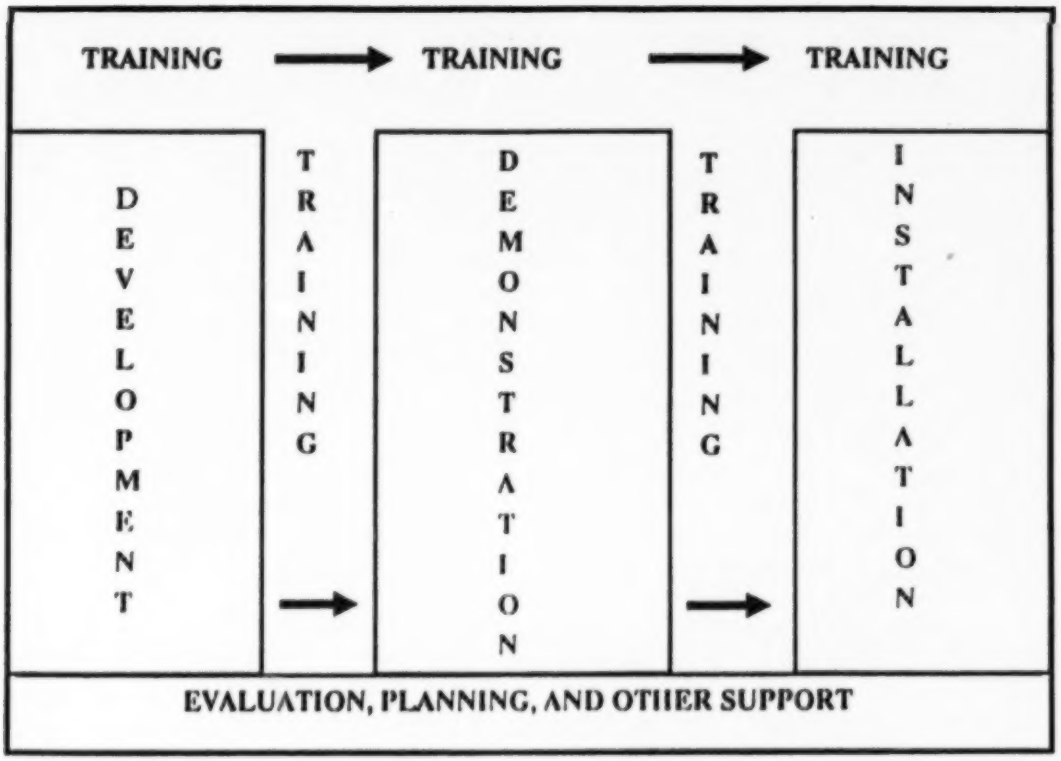
An essential role of **Training Programs** is to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate the shift of successful program models from development to demonstration and from demonstration to installation and to help staff maintain the knowledge and skills required for continued successful program performance. Examples of funded projects in this category are statewide training projects in marketing to the hard-to-reach and the regional staff development projects. The evaluation of these projects is handled in Chapter 4.

5. **Evaluation, Planning and other Support Projects** - Projects in this category are specific activities designed to improve the management practice.

Funded projects in this category might include strategic planning and evaluation of the impact of CAI on outcome measures. The evaluation of these projects is addressed in Chapter 5.

A simplified diagram of the project typology is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. PROJECT TYPOLOGY



This framework helps us to sort out the kind of evaluation and monitoring activities to use for the various types of special projects. Even though there will probably always be special projects that do not fit neatly into these five categories, most projects will incorporate parts of one or more types. By examining the areas of overlap with these categories, those designing evaluation and monitoring approaches for projects that do not conform to the proposed categories should be able to find useful and relevant information and examples.

THE PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

In order for evaluation efforts to be successful in a complex organizational environment, it is essential that central participants have a shared concept of the purpose for undertaking evaluation activities. A primary goal for evaluation efforts, one to which we believe all pa ticipants in the process can subscribe, is "to improve the effectiveness of the service delivery system."

Developmental Programs can be thought of as entrepreneurial activities. They are by nature risky, and they frequently aren't successful. However, they teach us a great deal about what does work, and eventually that knowledge can be used to develop a model that is successful. Evaluation in a **Development Project** focuses on gathering information on the possibilities of the program.

The purpose for evaluating **Demonstration Projects** is to assess their performance in field conditions. We want to know if the program works well enough to implement statewide. We also want to know the performance standards for the program so that it can be monitored effectively when it is installed on a wider basis.

For **Installation Projects**, evaluation and monitoring efforts are applied to determine how well these programs are meeting the standards developed in the Demonstration phase. When programs do not meet these standards, it is up to managers at the program site and the funding agency to do something about it. When managers are given valid and reliable tools to judge their organization's performance against that of some standard, they are eager to use them and incorporate them into their management procedures.

With few exceptions, the **Training, Evaluation** and **Planning** activities are not continuous. In **Training Projects**, evaluators want to know if the training episode was effective in transferring the knowlege, skills and attitudes of the curriculum and if the trainer made the best possible presentation of the material. The evaluator may also want to know if the training has had an effect on performance in the work setting. In some cases, when the training will be repeated over time as a standard item (e.g., training in prescriptive/diagnostic instruction), the evaluation may help improve the curriculum. In these cases, assessment of the power of the training to affect program performance will become especially important.

Planning and Evaluation Projects are usually episodic. The evaluation of these projects involves the validity and reliability of the process and whether the process produces the desired results.

We hope the above discussion has helped you see how a systematic and coordinated approach to the evaluation of Section 310 projects will benefit everyone. There will be substantial gains in system accountability at both the state and local levels. The data obtained through this evaluation and monitoring process would allow the Bureau of Adult and Continuing Education to document why monies were spent on a particular program mix and what outcomes were achieved. Data obtained from the more formal evaluation process in the Demonstration phase will prevent installation of programs that are not worth the investment and could be used to project the statewide impact when these projects move into the Installation phase. At the local level, program administrators will have the data to justify decisions about employing one program approach over another and to draw conclusions about outcomes. Teachers and counselors can monitor their programs, and students can be assured they are using a valuable service.

EVALUATION APPROACHES

In this section we will discuss the most appropriate evaluation approaches and activities for each project category. An overview of suggested evaluation approaches for **Development, Demonstration,** and **Installation Projects** is shown in Table 1 beginning on page 8. While a detailed explanation of all these evaluation methods and techniques is outside of the scope of this source book, we will discuss our rationale for selecting the approaches for each project typology. Several of these approaches will be developed in the subsequent chapters.

Evaluation, especially formal evaluation, is a costly undertaking. The resources for evaluation are limited, and they must be used in an efficient way. Because the 310 Projects have a focus on innovation, they can justify spending a higher proportion of resources on evaluation than programs designed to operate with established intervention strategies. Nonetheless, even in the Section 310 program, the percentage of resources expended on evaluation should be small compared to the expenditures on student services.

The most effective method for distributing the resources available for evaluation within the A.B.E. system is to concentrate the most sophisticated and methodologically advanced efforts on **Demonstration Projects.** It is at the conclusion of the Demonstration phase that the funder must decide and justify whether a program model should be considered for statewide replication. Here is where evaluations, even fairly expensive ones, can have the greatest payoff. Since the outcome of the decision to implement a program model statewide has major funding implications, this decision should be made with the support of the best and most persuasive information obtainable.

Development Programs, on the other hand, are less likely to benefit from formal evaluation procedures. These programs often have small budgets, and they do not serve a sufficiently large number of students to warrant sophisticated quantitative evaluation approaches. The decision about funding a Demonstration phase for a model that has been through a Development phase typically can be justified adequately with impressionistic rather than objective data.

Due to the large expenditure of resources for **Installation Programs**, there are legitimate demands to prove that these programs are achieving the results intended at a reasonable cost. However, if rigorous procedures have shown the effectiveness of a program at the Demonstration phase, that knowledge can be employed in designing much less expensive yet still valid strategies for monitoring a program's performance throughout its Installation and operating cycle.

Most **Training, Planning and Evaluation Projects** are limited in purpose. With few exceptions, the **Training Projects** are time-limited and repeated infrequently. Typically, some resources are reserved to evaluate the adequacy of the process. Then, if the desired improvement in the system does not occur, the process itself can be eliminated as a reason for failure.

With these points in mind, we will elaborate briefly on the evaluation and monitoring activities for the project types listed in Table 1.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

A written project description that documents what occurred during the course of a project's operating period is the minimum step necessary to evaluate **Development Projects**. Descriptive material might include program manuals, curricula, reviews of research, instructions for replication, or staff training materials. This project documentation and other relevant information could be submitted for expert review and testimony to evaluate the efficacy of the actual or anticipated program approaches or outcomes.

An important step for every project in the Development group being considered for possible replication as a **Demonstration Project** is an evaluability assessment. This assessment would critically examine whether the proposed program model meets criteria required to conduct a more formal evaluation. When it has been determined that a formal program evaluation is feasible, plans should be made to implement evaluation studies by selecting and pilot testing the instruments and procedures that may be used.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

For **Demonstration Projects**, evaluation activities should be considered an essential component of the project and included as part of the project proposal and budget. Ideally, there would be a start-up phase to **Demonstration Projects** that would involve the finalization of evaluation designs and staff training for evaluation tasks prior to the actual delivery of student services. The evaluation designs for **Demonstration Projects** should be comprehensive and sophisticated. They require the cooperative effort of project staff and Bureau staff and the possible use of outside consultants. Since **Demonstration Projects** usually involve several sites, the Bureau would serve in a coordinating role, assuring the comparability of methods used across sites. In many instances, it would be valuable to have staff with evaluation expertise available to work regularly with project staff at each site.

An important aspect of the evaluation process for **Demonstration Projects** involves examining the results obtained across all sites to assess the performance of the overall program model. Once the findings across program sites have been synthesized for specific program models, the summarized results should be compared to competing program models in order to choose the best alternative. This activity has become a subspeciality within the program evaluation field and is identified as meta-analysis.

INSTALLATION PROJECTS

When the decision has been made to institutionalize a program model through the funding of **Installation Projects**, the level of effort expended on evaluation can be reduced substantially. It is not necessary, for example, to reestablish at each installation site that the intervention methods employed in the model program strategy have an impact on the desired long-range outcomes. Rather, evaluation of **Installation Programs** should focus on whether the effective program processes from the Demonstration phase are being successfully implemented.

The evaluation experience gained in the Demonstration phase will be invaluable in designing the evaluation and monitoring systems for **Installation Programs**. The key data elements can be chosen and data collection procedures can be streamlined and implemented on a more limited basis by using samples and posttest-only designs. These simplified requirements will be relatively easy for local agencies to implement by providing minimal training for staff with limited evaluation expertise. The data obtained in the Demonstration phase can also be used to develop standards which will provide normative criteria for judging how well sites are performing in installing a given program model.

TABLE 1. EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES PROPOSED FOR 310 PROCESS

PHASE	ACTIVITIES
Development	Prepare **descriptive documentation** on innovative intervention approaches, including program manuals, instructions, curricula, and/or training materials (project sites) Review of **applied research** into causes of targeted problems or intervention approaches and their relation to funded 310 projects (Bureau staff, consultants) Solicit **expert testimony** on the anticipated or actual outcomes of innovative program strategies (Bureau or program sites, academics) Provide **policy analysis** relating 310 strategies to other initiatives within SED and other state agencies (Bureau and SED staff and/or state-level interagency groups, consultants) Conduct descriptive, informal **case studies** relating student outcomes to intervention processes; 100% samples of small student groups (project sites) Conduct **evaluability assessments** of program models being considered for demonstration: for example, are program outcomes well-defined and measurable? (project sites with technical assistance from Bureau) Develop **more rigorous evaluation approaches** by designing and pilot testing procedures and instruments (project sites with technical assistance from Bureau)

TABLE 1. EVALUATION & MONITORING ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

PHASE	ACTIVITIES
Demonstration	Refine and expand **evaluation procedures** from the Development Phase prior to implementation of programs at demonstration sites (Bureau staff with possible addition of outside consultants) Employ **formal evaluation designs** incorporating some or all of the following methods: • **controlled studies** using random assignment or **quasi-experimental designs** • **large samples** with heterogeneous social groups • **pre-post outcome measures**, using some combination of comprehensive testing, detailed interviews, staff or student questionnaires, etc. • **client satisfaction** studies and other community-based measures to assess program acceptance among the public • **cost-accounting** procedures to accurately document the program's use of resources • assessment of **unintended consequences** of program interventions through comprehensive approaches to monitoring program impact • use **follow-up investigations** to measure ultimate program impacts • **studies** coordinated by Bureau and carried out in conjunction with project staff and possibly outside consultants Analyze **data across demonstration sites** to determine effectiveness of program model and to identify critical factors affecting program performance; disseminate findings through evaluation reports, newsletters, etc. (Bureau)

TABLE 1. EVALUATION & MONITORING ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

PHASE	ACTIVITIES
Installation	Use **meta-analysis** techniques to synthesize findings across competing program models and to select most effective and efficient program models for installation (Bureau) Implement a **limited set of previously developed procedures** to evaluate the conformance of installation sites to the demonstrated program model (Bureau-designed, with project sites supplying data) Develop a **monitoring system** at installation sites which would have some or all of the following characteristics: • use **brief questionnaires**, automated tests or other low-cost methods to obtain student outcome measures • collect data on a **posttest-only** basis and for small samples to further reduce cost • install **management information systems** that rely on **aggregated data** reported by project sites to document comprehensive program information such as number of students served, student characteristics, or number of services provided, results for student groups relative to standards • incorporate **site visits** by regional staff as a means of gathering additional monitoring information, to conduct **program audits** and to aid in the use of this information for program management at the local level Provide a system to **process data centrally** and distribute it to program directors and Bureau field staff on a timely basis. Reports would include **standardized criteria** (initially obtained in the Demonstration phase, subsequently assembled from Installation sites) against which to assess project performance

Appendix D

Principles and Diagnostic Questions from ABE Staff Development Self-Study Guide

General Principle A: All segments of those involved in the ABE program are involved in planning for staff development.

Diagnostic questions:

1. Does your staff development program assess the perceived training needs of teachers, counselors, other staff?

2. Is the local ABE program director involved in inservice programs?

3. Have participants been involved in diagnosing, implementing and evaluating their own learning experiences?

4. Have ABE programs in your area collaborated in the planning and implementation of staff development?

General Principle B: Institutional policies support effective ABE staff development activities.

Diagnostic questions:

1. Is staff development an on-going process that encourages growth of continuing staff?

2. Does staff development encourage new staff to become an integral part of the ABE system and program development?

3. Is the staff development program closely related to State or local priorities?

4. Does your ABE program link training activities to a professional development plan (PDP) or a general program effort?

General Principle C: Training conditions facilitate effective staff development activities.

Diagnostic questions:

1. Are ABE teachers permitted to participate in staff development activities on "prime time" as part of their professional assignment?

2. Are training sessions held in comfortable surroundings away from class sites?

3. Does staff development provide positive incentives to participate, both during the activity and during its

4. Have opportunities been provided during training sessions for small-group discussions of the application of new practices and sharing of ideas about effective instruction?

5. Does the staff development allow teachers to experiment with new ideas when working in teams or with other group support?

6. Does your staff development program employ persons perceived as credible by the group in training?

7. Are teachers who have been trained as staff developers involved in staff training activities?

General Principle D: Staff development provides sufficient time and opportunity for participants to learn, practice, master and apply the training content.

Diagnostic questions:

1. Does your ABE staff development allow for intervals in which to plan and try out new approaches and return to evaluate their successes and problems?

2. Has time for experimentation been provided while teachers adapt new practices to meet the needs of their students?

3. Is personal, in-classroom assistance from administrators and fellow teachers available while proctices are being implemented?

4. Are teachers given the opportunity to periodically meet and share ideas with colleagues?

5. Have inservice programs been planned to accomodate both short and long range staff needs?

6. Is there a plan or set of instructional materials ready for use when participants leave training activities?

General Principle E: The staff development program recognizes individual learner needs and provides experiences to address these needs.

Diagnostic questions:

1. Do training activities permit variation in the ways the learners participate, and in ways they use what they learn?

2. Does your staff development program provide different educational experiences for participants at different stages of development?

3. Are participants' concerns listened to, and appropriate program adjustments made?

General Principle F: Evaluation is an integral component of ABE staff development.

Diagnostic questions:

1. Does your staff development process provide continuous feedback on the effectiveness of training?

2. Has the process employed a variety of evaluation techniques?

3. Do evaluation results influence future planning and implementation of staff development activities?